

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
NSC-05 /056 W
-----061335 102222Z /72

R 102040Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8507
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 08602

E. O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: EAIR, ECAC, FR
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: FRENCH VIEWS RE ECAC-US MEETING

SUMMARY: ABRAHAM IS GOING INTO NEXT WEEK'S ECAC MEETING WITH THE UNITED STATES WITH STRONGLY NEGATIVE VIEWS REGARDING CURRENT US AVIATION POLICY ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO CHARTERS AND AIR FARES. SIMILAR VIEWS ARE BEING VOICED BY OTHERS IN AVIATION AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES. ALL SEE THE U.S. AS PUSHING TOO HARD IN THE CHEAP AIR TRANSPORTATION AREA TO THE DETRIMENT OF FRENCH INTERESTS. WE HAVE COUNTERED THESE VIEWS IN OUR CONVERSATIONS, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT INTERNATIONAL AVIATION QUESTIONS MAY SOON TAKE ON A STRONGER POLITICAL COLORATION IN US-FRENCH RELATIONS. END SUMMART.

1. THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES ON NEXT WEEK'S ECAC DELEGATION ARE CONCERNED, ANNOYED, AND BITTER ABOUT U.S. POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL CHARTERS AND AIR FARES.
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THIS WAS MADE EMPHATICALLY CLEAR TO CIVIL AIR ATTACHE MARCH 9 BY CLAUDE ABRAHAM (DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION -- WHOSE REPOSIBILITIES RELATE TO SUPERVISING BOTH CAB AND FAA TYPE ACTIVITIES IN THE GOF) AND ROBERT ESPEROU (DIRECTOR OF THE ECONOMIC AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE, DGAC), PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON. ABRAHAM, WHO DOMINATED THE HIGHLY GENERALIZED CONVERSATION

STATED THAT HE WAS IN COMPLETE DISAGREEMENT WITH MOST RECENT CAB INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS AS UTTERLY UNSUITABLE TO THE NATURE OF AVIATION, LIKELY TO LEAD TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY, AND LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORSENING OF THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC CRISIS.

2. ABRAHAM WAS NOT WILLING TO MAKE THESE BROAD COMMENTS SPECIFIC OTHER THAN TO INDICATE STRONGLY HE WOULD SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF AIR FRANCE, TO NOTE FRANCE'S SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM IN THE CURRENT AIR FARES DISPUTE WITH THE UNITED STATES, TO ALLUDE TO "SUCCESSFUL" FRENCH EFFORTS TO KEEP BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS IN LINE WITH RESPECT TO AIR FARES, AND TO SPEAK OF A "PROFOUND LACK OF COURTESY" BY THE U.S. TOWARD ITS PARTNERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BY DEVELOPING AND ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT ITS OWN CHARTER AND FARES POLICY. THE RESULT OF US POLICIES, HE ASSERTED, WILL BE TO RUIN THE ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, TO CAUSE SEVERE PROBLEMS FOR AIR FRANCE. CONSEQUENTLY, FRANCE WILL NOT ACCEPT THE US EMPHASIS ON A LIBERAL CHARTER REGIME AND LOW AIR FARES. ABRAHAM HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT AS A RESULT OF NEXT WEEK'S DISCUSSIONS AND SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW UP THE UNITED STATES WOULD AGREE TO MAINTAIN "A MINIMUM OF MARKET ORGANIZATION AND A MINIMUM OF

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ORDER" IN THE INTERNATIONAL AVIATION INDUSTRY.

3. SHOULD THE UNITED STATES NOT MAKE A SIGNIFICANT ACCOMMODATION TO THE EUROPEANS, HE WENT ON, IT RISKS THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT AVIATION DISPUTES WILL SPILL OVER INTO OTHER AREAS AND THAT VARIOUS EUROPEAN AIRLINES AND GOVERNMENTS (PROBABLY ORGANIZED THROUGH THE EEC) WILL MAKE AN EFFECTIVE COMMON CAUSE AGAINST U.S. AIRLINE OPERATIONS IN EUROPE. SIX MONTHS AGO, HE ASSERTED, THERE WAS NO REALLY WIDESPREAD EUROPEAN SENTIMENT FOR COORDINATED ORGANIZATION BUT IT IS THERE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 08602

TODAY AND FRANCE, HE SAID, SUPPORTS THIS AS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE ITS INTERESTS AGAINST AN AMERICAN ONSLAUGHT WHICH LEFT UNCHECKED, WOULD REDUCE CARRIAGE OF PASSENGERS BY FRENCH CARRIERS (SCHEDULED AND CHARTER TOGETHER) BETWEEN THE U. S. AND FRANCE TO SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THE 50 PERCENT LEVEL, A SITUATION THE GOF COULD NOT ACCEPT.

4. COMMENT: ABRAHAM HAS A REPUTATION FOR COMING ON STRONGLY IN DISCUSSIONS AND OF BEING A HARD-LINER IN HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONCERN HE EXPRESSED IS INCREASINGLY SHARED ELSEWHERE IN PARIS. IN A RECENT CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC/ MINISTER, FROMENT-MEURICE, THE QUAI'S DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, EXPRESSED THEIR GENERAL CONCERN. LAST WEEK, GIRAUDET, PRESIDENT OF AIR FRANCE, SHARPLY CRITICIZED CURRENT U.S. POLICY ON THE NORTH ATLANTIC AT AN INFORMAL LUNCHEON WITH
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MINECON AND A GROUP OF FRENCH BANKERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS. ON BOTH OCCASIONS, WE COUNTERED THESE SHARP CRITICISMS VIGOROUSLY. PARTICULARLY AT THE GIRAUDET LUNCHEON, WE UNDERLINED SUCH FACTORS AS CONSUMER INTERESTS, IN-EFFICIENCY AND LACK OF COMPETITIVENESS OF SOME EUROPEAN CARRIERS WHOSE GOVERNMENTS PUT THE FLAG ABOVE RATIONAL ECONOMICS, INFLUENCE OF THE LAKER OPERATIONS ON THE SYSTEM, ETC.

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